

Health Care Legislative Monitor

Congressman Jim Nussle

Manchester, Iowa

Summer 2004

Jim Nussle's Agenda for Iowa...

**Protect our
Nation with
Homeland Security**

**Strengthen the
Family Farm**

**Fair Taxation &
Responsible Budgets**

**Long-term
Energy Strategies**

**Retirement Security
for All Iowans**

**Strengthen
Medicare &
Ensure Health
Care Access**

**Student-centered
Education with
Local Control**

**Keep Promises Made
to Our Nation's
Veterans**

**Grow Our Economy
to Create Jobs**

Nussle Agenda to Improve Health Care in Iowa

Ensure Access to Affordable, Quality Health Care

"I will work to put important health care decisions back into the hands of patients and their health providers. We must make sure Iowans are treated fairly by Medicare and other health care programs. We must find ways to recruit and retain high-quality health providers into rural and underserved areas to provide accessible care for all Iowans. We should address our current and new health care challenges with affordable solutions such as preventative medicine."

Jim Nussle

Jim has worked on Iowa's health care priorities since coming to Congress and will continue to work on these priorities in the 108th Congress.

Jim is working to achieve a positive legislative agenda for health care for Iowans. After countless meetings with Iowans, as well as through letters, e-mails and phone calls, he has created the following goals.

Health Care Improvement Goals:

1. Implement and Strengthen the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization law
2. Provide Fair Medicare Reimbursements to Rural and Under-served Areas
3. Attract Providers and Professionals to Rural and Under-served Areas
4. Provide Affordable Health Care for All Iowans
5. Promote Prevention
6. Meet the New Health Challenges of the Aging Population

In order to achieve the goals to help modernize Medicare with prescription drugs, Jim has sponsored and co-sponsored many pieces of legislation, and as the House Budget Committee Chairman, he has written many health care items into his budget. You will find a listing of these items on the following pages.

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Nussle's Health Care Agenda Legislation:

FY2005 Budget Resolution (H.Con. Res. 395)

- Provides necessary resources to continue implementation of the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act.
- Creates a special reserve fund to address those who cannot afford health insurance.
- Creates a special reserve fund to provide Medicaid coverage for children with special needs.
- Roots out the most egregious examples of waste, fraud and abuse in the Medicaid program.
- *Constructed by Rep. Nussle, as chairman of the House Budget Committee. Approved by the House on March 25, 2004.*

Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act (H.R. 1)

Including Nussle Iowa Provisions

- Provides more fair reimbursement for Iowa's hospitals by revising the calculation of labor costs.
- Promotes increased access to care by providing a 5% bonus payment to primary and specialty care physicians in rural areas for 2005 to 2007.
- Provides affordable, voluntary prescription drug coverage for seniors.
- Equity for rural and small urban areas' hospital base payments.
- Predictable reimbursements for physician services.
- Adds a 5% increase for all rural home health agencies until 2005.
- Provides flexibility for Critical Access Hospitals.
- Increases payment for emergency ambulance transportation trips.
- Provides for an increase of physician reimbursements in rural states for 2004 and 2005.
- *The final conference report for H.R. 1 was approved by the House on November 22, 2003 and the Senate on November 25, 2003. The President signed it into law on December 8, 2003.*

Stabilized Medicare Physician Payments and Equity for Rural and Small Urban Hospitals (H.J. Res. 2)

- Equalizes rural and small urban hospital base payments for 2003.
- Eliminates the pending cut in physician payments and provides stability for future payments.
- *Approved by Congress on February 13, 2003. Signed into law by the President on March 20, 2003.*

Appropriations for the Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education for fiscal year 2004 (H.R. 2673)

- Provides \$27.98 billion for the National Institutes of Health for critical research.
- Expands Community Health Center programs to \$1.62 billion.
- *Approved by Congress on January 22, 2004. Signed into law by the President on January 23, 2004.*

Rural Health Care Coalition (RHCC)

- Rep. Nussle has served as past chairman and is currently a member of the Steering Committee; Co-chair of the RHCC working group on beneficiary issues/access to health insurance.

Access to CareHEALTH Act (H.R. 5/H.R. 4280)

- Reforms the health care liability system enabling physicians to provide patient access to care.
- *Cosponsored by Rep. Nussle. Approved by the House of Representatives on March 13, 2003. Unfortunately, similar legislation was defeated in the Senate on July 9, 2003. Similar legislation (H.R. 4280) was approved by the House of Representatives on May 13, 2004.*

Health Savings Accounts Premium Deductibility (H.R. 3901)

- Provides further financial incentive for individuals to establish Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) by allowing for a 100 percent tax deduction of premium costs.
- *Co-sponsored by Rep. Nussle, pending in the House Committee on Ways and Means.*

Small Business Health Fairness Act (H.R. 4279)

- Adjusts current rules to benefit employees by including a yearly rollover for remaining flexible spending account (FSA) funds.
- *Approved by the House of Representatives on May 12, 2004.*

The Bipartisan Patient Protection Act (H.R. 2563)

- Makes health care more accessible, holds HMOs accountable and adds important new patients' rights.
- *Approved by the House of Representatives on August 2, 2001. The Senate failed to take action prior to adjournment.*

Health Care Parity for Legal and Recreational Activities Act (H.R. 1749)

- Prohibits an insurance company from denying benefits for injuries resulting from recreational activities such as motorcycling and skiing.
- *Co-sponsored by Rep. Nussle, pending in the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.*

Health Care Provider AssistanceMedicare Regulatory and Contracting Reform Act (H.R. 810)

- Streamlines the regulatory process and enhances education and assistance for health care providers.
- Reduces complex paperwork that burdens both doctors and seniors.
- *Co-sponsored by Rep. Nussle. Approved by the House Committee on Ways and Means on April 2, 2003. The provisions of H.R. 2333 were included in H.R. 1, the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act, as signed into law by the President on December 8, 2003.*

Health and Higher Education Facilities Improvement Act (H.R. 661)

- Bank deductibility bill to provide non-profits with more options to finance bond debt.
- *Introduced by Rep. Nussle, pending in the House Committee on Ways and Means.*

American Hospital Preservation Act (H.R. 1710)

- Increases the amount of payment for inpatient hospital services under the Medicare Program.
- *Co-sponsored by Rep. Nussle. The provisions of H.R. 1710 were included in H.R. 1, the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act, as signed into law by the President on December 8, 2003.*

Medicare Area Wage Index and Standardized Rate Act (H.R. 1580)

- Establishes a floor for the Medicare wage index.
- Makes hospital base payments in all areas equal to that of large urban hospitals (standardized amount).
- *Co-sponsored by Rep. Nussle.*
- *The provisions of H.R. 1580 were included in H.R. 1, the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act, as signed into law by the President on December 8, 2003.*

Health Care Access and Rural Equity Act (H.R. 1675)

- Provides for more equitable reimbursements for rural hospitals.
- *Co-sponsored by Rep. Nussle.*
- *The provisions of H.R. 1675 were included in H.R. 1, the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act, as signed into law by the President on December 8, 2003.*

Rural Provider Equity Act (H.R. 2333)

- Provides for more equitable Medicare reimbursement of health care providers including physicians and home health agencies.
- *Co-sponsored by Rep. Nussle.*
- *The provisions of H.R. 2333 were included in H.R. 1, the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act, as signed into law by the President on December 8, 2003.*

Medicare Patient Access to Physical Therapists Act (H.R. 792)

- Provides for direct Medicare patient access to physical therapy services without a physician referral.
- *Co-sponsored by Rep. Nussle, pending in the House Committee on Ways and Means.*

Chiropractors in Medicare

- *Rep. Nussle co-signed a letter (Ramstad-Pomeroy) in support of a Medicare demonstration project for chiropractors to be included in Medicare legislation. The demonstration project was included in H.R. 1, the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act, as signed into law by the President on December 8, 2003.*

Rehabilitation Hospitals/ "75% Rule"

- *Rep. Nussle co-signed several letters to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) expressing concern with the so-called "75% rule" as it relates to rehabilitation hospitals.*